DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 347 636 EA 024 076

AUTHOR	Liontos, Lynn Balster
TITLE	Transformational Leadership. ERIC Digest, Number 72.
INSTITUTION	ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management, Eugene, Oreg.
SPONS AGENCY	Office of Educational Research and Improvement (ED), Washington, DC.
REPORT NO	EDO-EA-92-5
PUB DATE	Aug 92
CONTRACT	RI88062004
NOTE	3p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Publication Sales, ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management, University of Oregon, 1787 Agate Street, Eugene, OR 97403 (free; $2.50 postage and handling).
PUB TYPE	Information Analyses - ERIC Clearinghouse Products (071)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Cooperative Planning; *Educational Improvement; Elementary Secondary Education; Instructional Leadership; *Leadership; *Leadership Styles; Organizational Climate; *Principals; *Teacher Administrator Relationship; Teacher Supervision
IDENTIFIERS	ERIC Digests

ABSTRACT

This document examines transformational leadership, which focuses on the importance of teamwork and comprehensive school improvement, as an alternative to other modes of leadership. Transformational leadership is contrasted with: (1) instructional leadership, which encompasses hierarchies and leader supervision and usually excludes teacher development; and (2) transactional leadership, which is based on an exchange of services for various kinds of rewards that the leader controls, at least in part. The goals of transformational leadership include helping staff develop and maintain a collaborative, professional school culture; fostering teacher development; and helping teachers solve problems more effectively. Strategies of transformational leadership are described. Results include a positive influence on teacher collaboration, improved teacher attitudes toward school improvement, and altered instructional behavior. However, transformational leadership should be viewed as only one part of a balanced approach to creating high performance in schools. (7 references) (LMI)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ERIC DIGEST

AUGUST 1992 NUMBER 72 EDO-EA-92-5

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

ED347636

Transformational Leadership

by Lynn Balster Liontos

Views of school leadership are changing largely because of current restructuring initiatives and the demands of the 90s. Advocates for school reform also usually advocate altering power relationships.

The problem, explain Douglas Mitchell and Sharon Tucker (1992), is that we have tended to think of leadership as the capacity to take charge and get things done. This view keeps us from focusing on the importance of teamwork and comprehensive school improvement. Perhaps it is time, they say, to stop thinking of leadership as aggressive action and more as a way of thinking—about ourselves, our jobs, and the nature of the educational process. Thus, "instructional leadership" is "out" and "transformational leadership" is "in."

How Has the Term 'Transformational Leadership' Evolved and What Does It Mean?

The idea of transformational leadership was first developed by James McGregor Burns in 1978 and later extended by Bernard Bass as well as others. Neither Burns nor Bass studied schools but rather based their work on political leaders, Army officers, or business executives.

For example, there has been a shift in businesses away from Type A to Type Z organizations. Type Z organizations reduce differences in status between workers and managers, emphasize participative decision-making, and are based on a form of "consensual" or "facilitative" power that is manifested *through* other people instead of *over* other people (Kenneth Leithwood 1992).

Although there have been few studies of such leadership in schools and the definition of transformational leadership is still vague, evidence shows that there are similarities in transformational leadership whether it is in a school setting or a business environment (Nancy Hoover and others 1991, Kenneth Leithwood and Doris Jantzi 1990, Leithwood)

"The issue is more than simply who makes which decisions," says Richard Sagor (1992). "Rather it is finding a way to be successful in collaboratively defining the essential purpose of teaching and learning and then empowering the entire school community to become energized and focused. In schools where such a focus has been achieved, we found that teaching and learning became transformative for everyone."

How Does This Differ from Other School Leadership Styles?

Instructional leadership encompasses hierarchies and top-down leadership, where the leader is supposed to know the best form of instruction and closely monitors teachers' and students' work. One of the problems with this, says Mary Poplin (1992), is that great administrators aren't always great classroom leaders and vice versa. Another difficulty is that this form of leadership concentrates on the growth of *students* but rarely looks at the growth of *teachers*. Since she believes that education now calls on administrators to be "the servants of collective vision," as well as "editors, cheerleaders, problem solvers, and resource finders," instructional leadership, she declares, has outlived its usefulness.

Transactional leadership is sometimes called bartering. It is based on an exchange of services (from a teacher, for instance) for various kinds of rewards (such as a salary) that the leader controls, at least in part.

Transactional leadership is often viewed as being complementary with transformational leadership. Thomas Sergiovanni (1990) considers transformational leadership a first stage and central to getting day-to-day routines carried out. However, Leithwood says it doesn't stimulate improvement. Mitchell and Tucker add that transactional leadership works only when both leaders and followers understand and are in agreement about which tasks are important.

What Are the Goals of Transformational Leadership?

Leithwood finds that transformational leaders pursue three fundamental goals:

1. *Helping staff develop and maintain a collaborative, professional school culture.* This means staff members often talk, observe, critique, and plan together. Norms of collective responsibility and continuous improvement encourage them to teach each other how to teach better. Transformational leaders involve staff in collaborative goal setting, reduce teacher isolation, use bureaucratic mechanisms to support cultural changes, share leadership with others by delegating power, and actively communicate the school's norms and beliefs.

2. *Fostering teacher development.* One of Leithwood's studies suggests that teachers' motivation for development is enhanced when they internalize goals for professional growth. This process, Leithwood

EA 024 076

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

found, is facilitated when they are strongly committed to a school mission. When leaders give staff a role in solving nonroutine school improvement problems, they should make sure goals are explicit and ambitious but not unrealistic.

3. *Helping teachers solve problems more effectively.* Transformational leadership is valued by some, says Leithwood, because it stimulates teachers to engage in new activities and put forth that "extra effort" (see also Hoover and others, Sergiovanni, Sagor). Leithwood found that transformational leaders use practices primarily to help staff members work smarter, not harder. "These leaders shared a genuine belief that their staff members as a group could develop better solutions than the principal could alone," concludes Leithwood.

What Strategies Do Transformational Leaders Use?

Here are specific ideas, culled from several sources on transformational leadership (Sagor, Leithwood, Leithwood and Jantzi, Poplin):

- Visit each classroom every day; assist in classrooms; encourage teachers to visit one another's classes.
- Involve the whole staff in deliberating on school goals, beliefs, and visions at the beginning of the year.
- Help teachers work smarter by actively seeking different interpretations and checking out assumptions; place individual problems in the larger perspective of the whole school; avoid commitment to preconceived solutions; clarify and summarize at key points during meetings; and keep the group on task but do not impose your own perspective.
- Use action research teams or school improvement teams as a way of sharing power. Give everyone responsibilities and involve staff in governance functions. For those not participating, ask them to be in charge of a committee.
- Find the good things that are happening and publicly recognize the work of staff and students who have contributed to school improvement. Write private notes to teachers expressing appreciation for special efforts.
- Survey the staff often about their wants and needs. Be receptive to teachers' attitudes and philosophies. Use active listening and show people you truly care about them.
- Let teachers experiment with new ideas. Share and discuss research with them. Propose questions for people to think about.
- Bring workshops to your school where it's comfortable for staff to participate. Get teachers to share their talents with one another. Give a workshop yourself and share information with staff on conferences that you attend.
- When hiring new staff, let them know you want them actively involved in school decision-making; hire teachers with a commitment to collaboration. Give teachers the option to transfer if they can't wholly commit themselves to the school's purposes.
- Have high expectations for teachers and students, but don't expect 100 percent if you aren't also willing to give the same. Tell teachers you want them to be the best teachers they possibly can be.
- Use bureaucratic mechanisms to support teachers, such as finding money for a project or providing time for collaborative planning during the workday. Protect teachers from the problems of limited time, excessive paperwork, and demands from other agencies.
- Let teachers know they are responsible for *all* students, not just their own classes.

What Are the Results of This Kind of Leadership?

Evidence of the effects of transformational leadership, according to Leithwood, is "uniformly positive." He cites two findings from his own studies: (1) transformational leadership practices have a sizeable influence on teacher collaboration, and (2) significant relationships exist between aspects of transformational leadership and teachers' own reports of changes in both attitudes toward school improvement and altered instructional behavior.

Sergiovanni suggests that student achievement can be "remarkably improved" by such leadership. Finally, Sagor found that schools where teachers and students reported a culture conducive to school success had a transformational leader as its principal.

However, Mitchell and Tucker conclude that transformational leadership should be seen as only one part of a balanced approach to creating high performance in schools. Leithwood agrees: "While most schools rely on both top-down and facilitative forms of power, finding the right balance is the problem. For schools that are restructuring, moving closer to the facilitative end of the power continuum will usually solve the problem."

RESOURCES

Hoover, Nancy R., and others. "Transformational and Transactional Leadership: An Empirical Test of a Theory." Paper presented at annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association (Chicago, Illinois, April 1991). 36 pages. ED 331 117.

Leithwood, Kenneth A. "The Move Toward Transformational Leadership." *Educational Leadership* 49, 5 (February 1992): 8-12. EJ 439 275.

Leithwood, Kenneth, and Doris Jantzi. "Transformational Leadership: How Principals Can Help School Cultures." Paper presented at annual meeting of the Canadian Association for Curriculum Studies (Victoria, British Columbia, June 1990). 49 pages. ED 323 622.

Mitchell, Douglas E., and Sharon Tucker. "Leadership as a Way of Thinking." *Educational Leadership* 49, 5 (February 1992): 30-35. EJ 439 281.

Poplin, Mary S. "The Leader's New Role: Looking to the Growth of Teachers." *Educational Leadership* 49, 5 (February 1992): 10-11. EJ 439 276.

Sagor, Richard D. "Three Principals Who Make a Difference." *Educational Leadership* 49, 5 (February 1992): 13-18. EJ 439 277.

Sergiovanni, Thomas J. "Adding Value to Leadership Gets Extraordinary Results." *Educational Leadership* 47, 8 (May 1990): 23-27. EJ 410 204.

A Product of the ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management • College of Education, University of Oregon • Eugene, Oregon 97403

This publication was prepared with funding from the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education, under contract No. OERI RI88062004. The ideas and opinions expressed in this Digest do not necessarily reflect the positions or policies of OERI, ED, or the Clearinghouse. This Digest is in the public domain and may be freely reproduced. EA 024 076